

# MIB/SIB SAFETY GUIDE FOR HOLIDAY DECORATIONS

The holiday season has begun! Use these guidelines to make sure safety is included in your holiday planning, both in the office and at home.

## DO

- ✓ **NEW** – You must use a proper ladder when hanging lights and other decorations. This season, thousands of people will receive emergency room treatment for injuries due to standing on chairs and other furniture pieces attempting to hang lights. Call OFAS Service Desk at 208-2222 to have a ladder delivered.
- ✓ Make sure holiday lights bear markings of an independent testing laboratory such as UL, FM, CE or CSA.
- ✓ Replace older incandescent light sets with newer LED strands. More than 3 light strands can be connected using LED compared to incandescent lights. LED lights use 100 times less electricity and have a much longer life span. The maximum end-to-end connection of LED light strands is not to exceed 220 watts (see total watts per strand on the manufacturer's tag affixed to each light set).
- ✓ Unplug all lights on trees and other decorations before leaving for the day. Lights could short-out and cause a fire.
- ✓ Inspect artificial trees making sure they're labeled as flame retardant.
- ✓ Use decorations (including ornaments) that are flame-resistant or non-combustible. Decorations must be flame-resistant or non-combustible in public spaces of the building.
- ✓ Check to make sure a natural tree is: fresh, green, and not too dry. Needles should be hard to pull from branches or when bent between your fingers, fresh needles don't break. When the trunk of a tree is bounced on the ground, a shower of falling needles shows the tree is too dry.
- ✓ Call the OFAS Service Desk at 208-2222 if you see tree needles or water puddles on the floor so they can arrange to clean it up. Needles and water on the floor will create a slipping hazard.

## DON'T

- Block exits or hallways with trees, lights or decorations. No decorative materials may be used in such a manner as to obstruct view of exit signs, fire alarm pull stations, fire strobe lights, public address speakers, sprinkler heads or fire extinguishers cabinets.
- Plug in more than three sets (incandescent bulbs) of lights strands per wall outlet and a maximum of 220 watts for LED lights sets.
- Run electrical cords through doorways or transoms (windows above doors).
- Let trees go without water and dry out. An 8 foot dry tree can burn completely down in 27 seconds.
- Ever use open flame candles in the Interior Complex.

\*OFAS safety personnel are available to advise your office before decorating begins. Special walk-through inspections will take place throughout this holiday season to ensure compliance. If you have any questions, please contact the Occupational Safety, Health, and Environmental Branch for assistance at 208-2222, 501-8693 or 219-0847.

For additional information pertaining to the full range of occupational safety and occupational health services available to DOI employees, visit our website at: <http://www.doi.gov/ofas/asd/oshe.cfm>